

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Notice of Intent to Repatriate a Cultural Item in the Possession of the Robert Hull Flemming Museum of the University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont

AGENCY: National Park Service, Interior

ACTION: Notice

Notice is hereby given under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 of the intent to repatriate a cultural item in the possession of the Robert Hull Flemming Museum of the University of Vermont, Burlington, VT, that meets the definitions of "sacred object" and "object of cultural patrimony" under section 2 of the act.

The item consists of a rattle made of a turtle shell and the hollow neck and head of the turtle, reinforced with willow, serving as a handle. The tortoise shell rattle was donated to the Museum in 1931 by Mr. Henry Schnakenberg, an art collector who is thought to have acquired the object in New York City about 1925-30. The rattle is designated accession number 1931.10.2 and E593.

The object's cultural affiliation was determined from the donor's information in consultation with the Oneida Indian Nation of New York. Representatives of the Oneida Indian Nation of New York have identified this item as a tortoise shell rattle. This tortoise shell rattle is needed by present day adherents for continued observance of the Great Feather Dance, a sacred ritual observance enacted during ceremonies of the traditional calendrical round including the Midwinter festival. Representatives of the Oneida Indian Nation of New York also affirm that this tortoise shell rattle is owned collectively by the members of the Oneida Indian Nation of New York and no individual had the right to sell or otherwise alienate the item.

Based on the above mentioned information, officials of the Robert Hull Fleming Museum, University of Vermont have determined that, pursuant to 25 U.S.C. 3001 (2), there is a relationship of shared group identity which can be reasonably traced between this tortoise shell rattle and the Oneida Indian Nation of New York. Officials of the Robert Hull Fleming Museum, University of Vermont have also determined that this tortoise shell rattle meets the definitions of sacred object and object of cultural patrimony pursuant to 25 U.S.C. 3001 (3)(C). Copies of this notice have been sent to the the Oneida Indian Nation of New York and the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin.

Representatives of any other Indian tribe that believes itself to be culturally affiliated with this object should contact Ann Porter, Director, Robert Hull Fleming Museum, Colchester Avenue Burlington, VT 05405, telephone: (802) 656-0750 before March 17, 1995. Repatriation of this tortoise shell rattle to the Oneida Indian Nation of New York can begin after that date if no additional claimants come forward.

Dated: February 9, 1995

Francis P. McManamon
Departmental Consulting Archeologist
Chief, Archeological Assistance Division
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